

3000 Spout Run Parkway #B-605  
Arlington, VA 22201

November 30, 2012

Ray and Associates, Inc.  
4403 1st Ave SE, Suite 407  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402-3221

Dear Ray and Associates, Inc.:

I am pleased to submit this application for consideration as Florida Commissioner of Education. Although I am currently not a Florida resident, I have frequently visited the State and have been a longtime supporter of Florida's education reform efforts, especially in the areas of academic accountability and school choice, and I would be honored to serve the State in this capacity. I have completed the online application and submitted my resume and biography, and I will be adding letters of recommendation to my file in coming days. Please let me know if you are in need of any other information or background material to complete my application.

I have long been very excited by the fresh, common-sense vision and leadership in education policy that Governors Bush and then Scott have provided the State, and by the State Legislature's and State Board's clear focus on prioritizing the reform of the State's preK-20 education system and on providing transparency, an abundance of data, increasing excellence, and diverse, plentiful schooling options to Florida families. As an expert in policy development and legislative advocacy and as a reform leader who has worked extensively at the Federal and State levels and as a CEO of non-profit and for-profit education reform organizations, I hope to have the opportunity to advance and provide leadership for the continued implementation of Florida's education reform agenda. Additionally, I would focus on keeping the State positioned as a national leader in demonstrating how well-crafted and well-executed State-level education reforms work and can make a tremendous difference in the lives of ALL students and their achievement levels.

Although a native Californian and current long-time resident of Virginia, I have spent the last fifteen years building a career as a leading voice for education reform both at the Federal level and in the States. I had the privilege of being appointed by President George W. Bush to three senior positions in the U.S. Department of Education, where I counseled Secretary Rod Paige, Secretary Margaret Spellings, and other senior leaders as U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education and as Chief of Staff of both the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development. In these positions, I worked with leaders across the U.S. Department of Education, as well as with many State Departments of Education, the White House, other Cabinet-level agencies, and Congress, on policy development and

implementation, litigation, and regulatory issues concerning preK-12 education, higher education and student loans, special education, civil rights, charter schools and school choice, homeschooling, and private education.

As U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary, I was responsible for overseeing policy and regulatory compliance issues for over 20 formula and discretionary grant programs totaling over \$20 billion in annual funding, including Title I. As Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary for Program Evaluation and Policy Development, I was the second-ranking political appointee responsible for the office that developed and oversaw the Department's \$60+ billion budget and that evaluated the efficacy and impact of dozens of Federal elementary, secondary, and higher education programs and reform initiatives.

I have also served as the President of two national 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations with a combined annual budget of over \$10 million, successfully leading a state projects team active in the legislative and policy promotion of education reforms in approximately 18 strategically selected states a year (including Florida, where I have sometimes partnered with former Governor Jeb Bush's foundation and with John Kirtley's school choice and tax credit scholarship organizations). In addition, I have served as a professional staff member at the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce, where I was a tireless key negotiator for now-Speaker of the House John Boehner on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as well as the lead Republican House staffer coordinating the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These experiences, coupled with the last four years of experience as an entrepreneur/consultant in education reform with Federal, State, and nonprofit clients, have seasoned me in building relationships with, negotiating with, advocating before, and building consensus with state legislators, as well as forging (often unlikely) bipartisan partnerships and alliances.

Because I have helped craft and negotiate (while working for Congress) and then implement (at the U.S. Department of Education) the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), as well as work for that statute's reform over the past decade, I am well aware of NCLB's strengths and deficiencies, and of the need for a muscular and focused State Education Chief voice in the impending re-authorization debate over that statute in the next coming year(s). Having been inside the "belly of the beast" of Federal Government for almost six years at senior levels, and then having spent the last six years advancing reforms primarily at the State and local levels, I am poised to help Florida develop and articulate a forceful and well-considered platform for how to change the way the Federal and State relationship currently works under NCLB, in order to advance and encourage State-level capacity-building and the adoption of proven reforms across the preK-20 policy spectrum.

A graduate of Harvard Law School (J.D.), I also hold two masters degrees from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (in public policy) and Stanford University (in history). I earned my bachelor's degree in history and American studies at Stanford University, where I graduated with distinction and *Phi Beta Kappa* honors and

received the University's highest student award for outstanding contributions to undergraduate education upon graduating.

These experiences and others detailed in the attached biography and resume have shaped me into an accomplished senior executive and effective public policy and education reform leader with especially strong critical-thinking and strategic-planning skills for addressing public policy and political problems. A results-oriented, dynamic public servant with significant experience in public speaking, communications and political strategy, as well as in policy reform development and implementation, I believe I could ably serve the children and families of Florida as Commissioner of Education. I would also enter this position with the knowledge, experience, and existing relationships with other State Education Chiefs to be a national voice for State-level reforms as they have been successfully advanced in Florida.

It would be honor to be considered for and to serve in this position. Please contact me at your earliest convenience if you would like to discuss my application and qualifications by phone or in person. Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles R. Hokanson, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "C" and "H".

Charles R. Hokanson, Jr.  
President and CEO  
Hokanson Consulting Group LLC

Enclosed:     Biography and Resume

**Charles R. Hokanson, Jr.**  
**President and CEO**  
**Hokanson Consulting Group LLC**

*An accomplished education reform leader and former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Mr. Hokanson is a results-oriented, dynamic executive with a demonstrated ability to advance nonprofit and government organizations to increasingly higher levels of performance. A specialist in Federal and State education law and policy reform, he has deep expertise in policy issues concerning early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, higher education, civil rights, special education and rehabilitation policy, charter schools, teacher quality, school choice, homeschooling, and private education. As President and CEO, Mr. Hokanson works with Federal and State government agencies, nonprofits, trade associations, and foundations on strategic management and planning, policy development and analysis, and donor relations.*



Prior to founding Hokanson Consulting Group LLC in December 2008, Mr. Hokanson served as President of the Alliance for School Choice and the Advocates for School Choice, leading the nation's largest 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations focused on promoting the school choice movement. He dramatically strengthened these organizations' infrastructure and financial situation, expanded 501(c)(3) fundraising by over 50 percent in his first year, and led a highly successful state projects team in the legislative and policy promotion of education reforms in approximately 18 strategically selected states per year.

From 2003-07, Mr. Hokanson served in three political appointments at the U.S. Department of Education. At various times, he was the second-ranking political official in three of the Department's primary offices, counseling two Cabinet Secretaries, two General Counsels, and Assistant Secretaries from every program and leadership office of the Department on policy, political, and management issues. As U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Mr. Hokanson was responsible for aligning over 20 preK-12 grant programs with the President's and Secretary's policy priorities. He also ensured compliance by States and grantees receiving over \$20 billion in annual funding and oversaw several of the Secretary's strategic policy initiatives. As Chief of Staff for the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, he worked directly with the Department's budget professionals to develop and oversee the Department's annual \$60+ billion mandatory and discretionary funding budgets. As Chief of Staff to the General Counsel and in his other positions, Mr. Hokanson was widely recognized as an expert at maneuvering successfully through the complex bureaucracy of the Department's regulatory and decision making processes and gained a strong reputation for



developing and coordinating savvy and thorough legal, policy, and political analyses of the toughest problems facing the Secretary.

Mr. Hokanson has also served as a Professional Staff Member to now-Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce, where he served as a key staff negotiator on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, as well as the House Republican lead staffer coordinating the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Prior to entering government service, Mr. Hokanson was Research Fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Public Policy Research and Finance Director and Research Fellow at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, where he co-edited a leading, widely read book on how to reform the Federal special education system, *Rethinking Special Education for a New Century* (with Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Andrew Rotherham, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Progressive Policy Institute, 2001). For the past decade, Mr. Hokanson has frequently served as a keynote speaker, moderator, or panelist at national and state conferences on education reform topics, and he has published opinions editorials or articles in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *World and I*, and other publications.

Before embarking on his education reform career, Mr. Hokanson was an Associate in the Washington, D.C. law firm of Steptoe & Johnson LLP and served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, the nation's most respected and widely-read law review of conservative and libertarian legal scholarship. He earned his *Juris Doctor* degree from Harvard Law School and a Master in Public Policy degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. He also holds a Master of Arts degree in History and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and American Studies from Stanford University, where he graduated with distinction and *Phi Beta Kappa* honors and received the University's highest student award at graduation.

Born and raised in California, Mr. Hokanson has resided in Arlington, Virginia, since 1998. An active member of the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies, he currently serves on the Board of Directors of Mary Craig Ministries, on the Board of Visitors of Ave Maria School of Law, as a Sunday School teacher at Grace Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and as a legal studies and nonprofit professional mentor for The Fund for American Studies. One of Stanford's and Harvard's most active alumni leaders, over the last 15 years he has also served as Governor of the Stanford Associates, President of the Washington D.C. Stanford Association, President of the Boston Stanford Association, President of the Harvard Law School Christian Fellowship Alumni Association, Secretary and Board Member of the Harvard Kennedy School Alumni Executive Council, and Vice President of the Harvard Kennedy School D.C. Alumni Council.

**CHARLES R. HOKANSON, JR.**

3000 Spout Run Parkway #B-605

Arlington, VA 22201

[charles\\_hokanson@me.com](mailto:charles_hokanson@me.com)

**ACCOMPLISHED EDUCATION REFORMER AND PUBLIC POLICY LEADER**

*Education Law & Policy • Organizational Leadership • Critical Thinking & Strategic Planning*

- Former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education and nonprofit chief executive officer with especially strong critical-thinking and strategic-planning skills for advancing Federal and State education reforms
- Deep subject-matter expertise in Federal and State education law and policy innovations, including preK-12, higher education and student loans, civil rights, special education, charter schools and school choice, and homeschooling
- Results-oriented, dynamic leader with demonstrated ability to catapult nonprofit organizations and government offices to increasingly higher levels of performance while achieving long-term strategic vision
- Demonstrated ability to define a problem, develop and evaluate options, assess reactions and consequences, build or negotiate consensus, and make and implement clear decisions, developed through multi-disciplinary graduate training in history, law, and public policy and through senior leadership roles in the Federal government and at a private foundation, a think tank, and non-profit policy and advocacy organizations

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**President and CEO**

**HOKANSON CONSULTING GROUP, LLC, Arlington, VA**

**December 2008-present**

- Currently managing all aspects of a consulting company offering strategic management, public policy development and analysis, and donor relations services to nonprofit organizations, foundations, trade associations, and Federal and State government agencies. Served as Executive Vice President to leading national education reform nonprofit.

**President**

**ALLIANCE FOR SCHOOL CHOICE, Washington, DC**

**March 2007-November 2008**

**ADVOCATES FOR SCHOOL CHOICE, Washington, DC**

**March 2007-November 2008**

- As president of two national 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) education reform nonprofits, dramatically strengthened these organizations' infrastructure and financial situation, instituted performance-based management and in-depth performance evaluations of all staff, developed strong relationships with 25 diverse board members, and increased 501(c)(3) fundraising by 50 percent in one year.
- Led a highly successful state projects team active in the legislative and policy promotion of education reforms in approximately 18 strategically selected states per year, working to statutorily enact two new programs in two states in 2008, while preserving over \$580 million in public funding across a total of 18 programs in 10 States and the District of Columbia serving 171,000 children, and expanding public support that year by an additional \$106 million in new scholarship funds.

**Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Chief of Staff, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development**

**Chief of Staff, Office of the General Counsel**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, Washington, DC**

**January 2003-March 2007**

- Served at various times as the second-ranking official in three of the U.S. Department of Education's most prominent offices, counseling two Cabinet Secretaries, two General Counsels, and Assistant Secretaries from every program and leadership office of the Department on policy, political, and management issues.
- As U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, was responsible for aligning over 20 preK-12 formula and discretionary grant programs with the Secretary's policy priorities, ensuring compliance by grantees receiving over \$20 billion annually, and overseeing the Secretary's preK-12 strategic policy initiatives.

- As Chief of Staff for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, worked directly with the U.S. Department of Education's Budget Service professionals to develop and oversee the Department's annual \$60+ billion mandatory and discretionary funding budgets.
- In all three positions, became firmly established as a key "go-to" expert for the Secretary and senior leaders when maneuvering successfully through the complex bureaucracy of the Department's regulatory and decision making processes, and gained a strong reputation both for developing and coordinating savvy and thorough legal, policy, and political analyses of the toughest problems facing the Secretary and for building consensus on solutions.

**Professional Staff Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Washington, DC**

**July 2001-December 2002**

- Education policy counsel to the Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce with primary legislative responsibility for writing and negotiating legislation on special education and rehabilitation (as chief House Republican staff member for the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), in addition to early childhood programs, charitable choice, Title IX, and civil rights law.
- Key negotiator for the U.S. House education committee chairman on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

**Finance Director and Research Fellow**

**THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION, Washington, DC**

**January 2000-July 2001**

**Research Fellow**

**MANHATTAN INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH, Washington, DC**

**January 2000-July 2001**

**Associate, Regulatory Practice Group**

**STEPTOE & JOHNSON LLP, Washington, DC**

**October 1998-July 1999**

**President and Editor-in-Chief, *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy***

**HARVARD SOCIETY FOR LAW & PUBLIC POLICY, INC., Cambridge, MA**

**June 1997-August 1998**

## **EDUCATION**

**HARVARD LAW SCHOOL, Cambridge, MA**

**Juris Doctor (J.D.)**

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY, JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, Cambridge, MA**

**Master in Public Policy (M.P.P.)**

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford, CA**

**Master of Arts (A.M.) in History**

**Bachelor of Arts (A.B.) with Distinction in History and American Studies**

Honors: *Phi Beta Kappa*; Recipient, Lloyd W. Dinkelspiel Award (highest undergraduate award)

## **CURRENT PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Board Member and Past President, Washington DC Stanford Association

Board Member and Past Vice President, Harvard Kennedy School DC Alumni Council

Board Member and Past President, Harvard Law School Christian Fellowship Alumni Association

Board Member, Ave Maria College of Law Board of Visitors

Board Member, Mary Craig Ministries

Founding Member and Sunday school teacher, Grace Presbyterian Church of Washington, DC (PCA)

Member and Past Executive Committee Member for the Religious Liberties Practice Group, Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies

Legal Studies and Nonprofit Professional Mentor, The Fund for American Studies

Active in local civic activities in Arlington, VA